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Afghanistan Situation Report



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11 January 1983

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Soviet military media are now giving more realistic view of
Soviet role and casualties in Afghanistan

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This document is prepared by the Office of Near East/South Asia
and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues
raised in the publication should be directed to

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SMALL-SCALE INSURGENT ATTACKS CONTINUE TO HURT THE SOVIETS

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Both insurgent and Soviet military activity have declined in the winter because of poor weather, but this has not prevented the resistance from continuing to launch small attacks throughout Afghanistan. These reports show once again that the insurgents are most effective when they use guerrilla tactics to hit the enemy where he is weak or unprotected. Using large groups, of even 100 men, would probably be dangerous for the insurgents in winter because they would not be able to withdraw and disperse quickly enough to evade air attacks.

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SOVIET COMBAT ROLE, CASUALTIES ACKNOWLEDGED [REDACTED]

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Breaking the usual practice of playing down the Soviet military's combat role in Afghanistan, Soviet media on several recent occasions have reported Soviet troops coming under fire and suffering casualties. The most graphic and telling portrayal appeared on the 26 December edition of a weekly armed forces television program, which showed film of a Soviet-escorted convoy under attack and carried a brief interview with a wounded Soviet lieutenant. Two items in the army newspaper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, on the 25th and 28th, likewise described Soviet troops coming under attack, citing in the former case a Soviet private who suffered burns while displaying heroism. [REDACTED]

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Comment: While these stories contained routine propaganda assertions that the Soviet-backed Afghan regime is winning the battle for popular support, the accompanying film and commentary tended to undercut those claims by conveying the impression that the regime is under attack not only on the highways but even in Kabul. Having pledged itself to persevering in Afghanistan, the new Andropov regime now seems to be warning the Soviet people that the struggle will be long and costly. [REDACTED]

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IN BRIEF

--Afghan police have arrested another Afghan employee of the US Embassy in Kabul. He is the sixth employee to be arrested since March 1982; only one has been released. [REDACTED]

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--The one-month term of Jamiat leader Burnahuddin Rabbani, the chairman of the Fundamentalist alliance in Peshawar, has not been renewed as was his predecessor's. The move presumably reflects unhappiness in insurgent circles with Rabanni's competence and dedication. [REDACTED]

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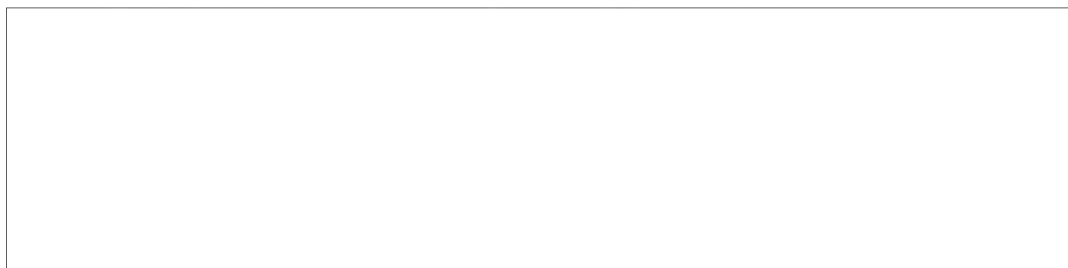
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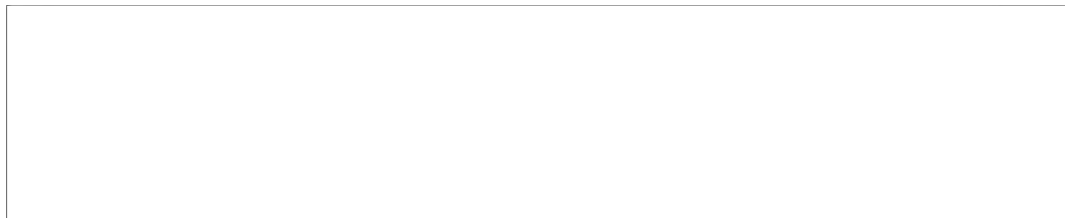
[Redacted] Iran is increasingly interested in UN food aid for its Afghan refugees. This growing interest reflects a more moderate Iranian outlook towards international political norms, which will probably make Tehran more receptive to the upcoming Cordovez trip. [Redacted]

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